

It Takes Just ONE LION

The following are SGI President Ikeda's remarks at a meeting in Tokyo on Jan. 2, his 70th birthday.

As a famous adage goes, "A person who bravely and vigorously exerts himself is stronger than the greatest multitude." Strength is not a question of numbers. One person of all-out commitment is enough. All it takes is one lion. A person who bravely and vigorously exerts him- or herself is more powerful than a horde a million strong. I have lived my life based on this determination. I am living proof of this adage.

In my youth, I suffered from tuberculosis and was physically weak. But I fought battle after battle. President Toda once wept, saying, "Daisaku probably won't live to be more than 30." On another occasion, he said, "If Daisaku dies, the Gakkai will have no future." And he once even went so far as to say to me, "I will give you my life! Live, in my stead, live long!"

And I — for whom the hopes of living long were so dim — fought with all my might to stay alive. Today I celebrate my 70th birthday.

In my youth, I vowed: "I will stand alone. I will depend on no one. I am a lion. I am a disciple of President Toda, and my aims and aspirations are indivisible from his. I will personally work with total dedication to spread the ideals and philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world without fail." All that I have done and achieved is the result of that pledge.

I have triumphed over the legions of the three powerful enemies of Buddhism, who have singled me out for attack and relentlessly tried to topple me. But their efforts have been in vain, and I have never been more energetic and in vigorous good health and spirits than today.

President Toda wrote in 1951 in his "Precepts for Youth":

We are not specialists in the field of debating political and educational issues. However,... through the power of this supreme religion, we seek to achieve human revolution, extend a helping hand to the distressed, enable each individual to build a happy life, and so create a realm of peace and prosperity in Japan.

These are profound words. What did President Toda wish to convey? He wanted to drive home the importance of working for people's happiness on a far more fundamental level than could ever possibly be done by politicians, educators or scholars.

Greatness as a human being is not determined by social position or academic credentials. The most respectable people are those who work for kosen-rufu as Nichiren Daishonin's disciples.

It was President Toda's final will and testament that we cherish and value these individuals above all. Doing so also accords with the Daishonin's spirit. Those who fail to show respect and courtesy to those who strive earnestly for kosen-rufu are perverting the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.

The key to all development lies in wholeheartedly protecting and supporting the members who are working to realize kosen-rufu. As long as we continue to do so, kosen-rufu will advance.

In contrast, those who exploit the SGI and betray their fellow members will definitely receive strict retribution according to the Mystic Law — the law of cause and effect.

Though one may be able to fool people, one cannot fool the Mystic Law.

There is far too much posturing and deceit in this world. The SGI, however, has advanced its movement to bring happiness and peace to all humanity with a pure, sincere intent. We have acted with earnest concern and commitment.

As a result, the SGI has developed into a global organization. It rises majestically as a king of the religious world.

Japan, a nest of jealousy and envy, is small and petty-minded. But the world is a friend and ally to the SGI — the world is the SGI's stage.

Every day, morning and evening, I am praying with all my heart for your health and long life and also for your prosperity, happiness and safety.

Let us make joyous, high-spirited progress again this year.

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